

# ANGLO-AMERICAN NAVAL UNDERSTANDING

by

RAYMOND LESLIE BUELL

*with the aid of the Research Staff of the Foreign Policy Association*

1 1 1

## INTRODUCTION

ONE of the most striking features of the new administrations in the United States and England is the desire of both to bring about an improvement in Anglo-American relations. The views of President Hoover on this subject first became known at the meeting of the League of Nations Preparatory Commission in April 1929, when Ambassador Gibson, speaking with the full authority of the American President, delivered an address which according to many observers did much to lift the naval disarmament discussions to a more hopeful plane. Mr. Gibson suggested a new method of approaching the problem and declared that the anti-war pact "will advance the cause of disarmament by removing doubts and fears which in the past have constituted our principal obstacle. Any approach to the disarmament problem on purely technical grounds is bound to be inconclusive . . . . So long as the approach to the problem is based upon old fears and old suspicions there is little hope. The lessons of the old strategies must be unlearned."<sup>1</sup>

In his Memorial Day address at Arlington Cemetery, President Hoover again referred to the anti-war pact, stating that if it "is to fulfill its high purpose, we and other nations must accept its consequences. We must clothe faith and idealism with action. . . . We must reconsider our own naval armament and the armament of the world in the light of their defensive and not their aggressive use. Limitation upward is not now our goal, but actual reduction of existing commitments to lowered levels."

On the same day that President Hoover spoke at Arlington, the British electorate was returning the Labour party to power under the leadership of Ramsay MacDonald. During his election campaign, Mr. MacDonald had stressed the importance of good relations with America. And he had scarcely taken office on June 5 when it was reported that he contemplated making a personal visit to President Hoover in Washington. A few days later, on June 14, General Charles G. Dawes, the new American Ambassador, arrived in London and after presenting his credentials to the King, hurried to Scotland for an interview with Mr. MacDonald. Following their conference on June 16, a joint statement was issued to the press declaring that an "informal and general and most satisfactory" conversation had been had in regard to the present position of naval disarmament. But both Mr. MacDonald and General Dawes "want to make it clear that other naval powers are expected to cooperate" in the forthcoming negotiations.

## POST-WAR NAVAL COMPETITION

Between the destruction of the Invincible Armada in 1588 and the conclusion of the World War the British Empire was mistress of the seas. In the eyes of Englishmen this command of the seas was necessary to protect the widespread dominions of the Empire and to insure the food supply and trade of the people of the British Isles. At the beginning of the twentieth century Germany challenged British naval supremacy, and in the opinion of a number of historians the naval rivalry that ensued be-

1. The technical aspects of this address are mentioned on p. 183.

tween Great Britain and Germany was one of the fundamental causes of the World War.<sup>2</sup>

Aroused by British interference with American commerce and also by the menace of the German submarine, the Congress of the United States enacted a naval appropriation act in 1916 which authorized the construction of ten first-class battleships, six battle cruisers, and a large number of smaller vessels. The avowed policy of the General Board of the American Navy was the creation of a "navy equal to the most powerful maintained" by any other nation in the world.

#### TERMS OF THE WASHINGTON TREATY

An impending rivalry in battleships between the British Empire and the United States was arrested at the Washington Conference on the Limitation of Armament of 1921-1922. This conference was called by the United States, and was attended also by the British Empire, Japan, France and Italy. On February 6, 1922 these five governments signed a Treaty for the Limitation of Naval

Armament which was duly ratified and entered into effect on August 21, 1923.<sup>3</sup> The treaty provided that between 1923 and 1931, when replacements may begin, the status of the battleships of the five powers shall be as follows:

	<i>Capital Ships</i>	<i>Tons</i>
British Empire .....	20	558,950 <sup>4</sup>
United States .....	18	525,850
Japan .....	10	301,320
France .....	10	221,170
Italy .....	10	182,800

For the time being the British Empire was allowed a somewhat larger tonnage and number in capital ships than the United States because a majority of its battleships were of an older type. Seven of the American battleships retained were completed between 1918 and 1923; while all of the British battleships retained were completed before 1918. The American battleships retained carry 192 large guns, while the British vessels carry 138.<sup>5</sup> The acceptance of these figures involved the scrapping by the British Empire, the United States and Japan of about 40 per cent of their capital ship strength, built and building.<sup>6</sup> Altogether 70 ships were scrapped as follows:

#### VESSELS SCRAPPED UNDER WASHINGTON TREATY

	COMPLETED		BUILDING		TOTAL	
	<i>No.</i>	<i>Total Tonnage</i>	<i>No.</i>	<i>Total Tonnage</i>	<i>No.</i>	<i>Total Tonnage</i>
United States .....	19	289,580	13	552,800	32	842,380
British Empire .....	22	447,750	....	.....	22	447,750
Japan .....	12	192,751	4	161,958	16	354,709
France .....	....	.....	....	.....	....	.....
Italy .....	....	.....	....	.....	....	.....

Neither France nor Italy was asked to scrap any existing tonnage in capital ships because of the relatively small size of their respective fleets.

Beginning in 1931<sup>6a</sup> replacements may be made so that by 1942 the capital ships of the five naval powers will be as follows:

	<i>Capital Ships</i>	<i>Tonnage</i>	<i>Ratio</i>
United States .....	15	525,000	5
British Empire .....	15	525,000	5
Japan .....	9	315,000	3
France .....	5 <sup>7</sup>	175,000	1.67
Italy .....	5 <sup>7</sup>	175,000	1.67

A schedule defines in detail how and when replacement shall take place.<sup>8</sup>

The Washington naval treaty also limited total tonnage in aircraft carriers to 135,000 tons each for the United States and the

5. The American ships have 24 16-inch guns, 124 14-inch and 44 12-inch guns—a total of 192. The British ships have 18 16-inch guns, 80 15-inch guns, and 40 13.5-inch guns—a total of 138.

6. *Conference on the Limitation of Armament*, Washington, 1921-1922, p. 236.

6a. While replacements for the British Empire, the United States and Japan do not take place until 1931, the treaty authorized France to lay down new battleships in 1927 to take the place of the *Jean Bart* and the *Courbet*, both of which reach the age limit in 1929. The treaty also authorized Italy to lay down two new battleships in 1927 and 1929, to take the place of the *Dante Alighieri*, to be scrapped in 1931. Neither government has, however, taken advantage of these replacement provisions. Cf. p. 191.

7. Number not fixed.

8. The treaty also provides that no capital ship shall exceed 35,000 tons, nor carry a gun with a calibre in excess of sixteen inches and that with certain exceptions no aircraft carrier shall exceed 27,000 tons nor carry a gun with a calibre in excess of eight inches. Arts. V, VI, IX, X.

2. Cf. Fay, S. B. *The Origins of the World War*, Vol. I. p. 234.

3. U. S. Treaty Series, No. 671.

4. Upon the completion of the *Rodney* and the *Nelson*, work on which was begun in 1922, the British Government agreed to scrap the *Thunderer*, *King George V*, *Ajax* and *Centurion*, leaving a total of twenty capital ships.

British Empire, 81,000 tons for Japan and 60,000 tons each for France and Italy.

Finally, the treaty provided that after eight years, or in 1931, "the United States shall arrange for a conference of all the Contracting Powers . . . to consider what changes, if any, in the treaty may be necessary to meet" possible "scientific and technical developments." The treaty remains in force until December 31, 1936, and, in case none of the contracting powers shall have given notice two years before that date of its intention to terminate the treaty, it shall continue in force until the expiration of two years from the date on which a notice of termination shall be given by one of the powers. Within one year of the date on which a notice of termination by any power has taken effect, all the contracting powers shall meet in conference.

#### SHIPS NOT LIMITED AT WASHINGTON

While the Washington Conference limited the number of capital ships and aircraft carriers it failed to limit the number of the lighter and faster auxiliaries—such as cruisers, destroyers and submarines. At the beginning of the conference the United States proposed a total tonnage of cruisers, flotilla leaders and destroyers for the United States and Great Britain of 450,000 tons each, and for Japan of 270,000 tons. In regard to submarines, a figure of 90,000 tons for the United States and also for Great Britain was suggested, and of 54,000 tons for Japan. The size of the French and Italian navies was reserved for later discussion.<sup>9</sup>

On December 18, 1921 M. Briand informed Mr. Hughes that while the French Government was willing to accept the proposed ratio for capital ships, it could not accept this ratio for light cruisers, torpedo boats and submarines.<sup>10</sup> In the discussion on auxiliary craft Great Britain demanded the abolition of the submarine. France, while criticizing its illegal use in the past, defended the submarine and declared that 90,000 tons was the absolute minimum for any navy wishing to have a submarine force.<sup>11</sup> This minimum equalled the sub-

marine figure proposed for Great Britain and the United States. Following the French statement, Mr. Balfour declared that "no limitation on auxiliary vessels capable of dealing with submarines could be admitted" by the British Empire.<sup>12</sup> Although in 1929 the British Government accepted the principle of equality in submarines with France,<sup>13</sup> in 1922 it was unwilling to do so, apparently because of the strained political relations between the two countries.<sup>14</sup> Although cruisers are not generally regarded as an adequate defense against submarines—a task usually turned over to destroyers—the British statement was construed to mean that the conference could not reach an agreement in regard to cruisers.

#### ORIGIN OF THE "TREATY" CRUISER

On December 28, 1921 Mr. Hughes suggested on behalf of the American delegation that if it were not possible to reach an agreement upon the tonnage of auxiliary craft, the tonnage limit of individual cruisers might be defined. He therefore proposed that no ship of war thereafter built, other than a battleship or aircraft carrier, should exceed a displacement of 10,000 tons, nor should any gun be carried by such a ship with a calibre in excess of eight inches.<sup>15</sup> At that time there was no 10,000-ton 8-inch gun cruiser in existence. The nearest approach was four British cruisers of the *Hawkins* class, laid down during the World War, which had an individual displacement of about 9,850 tons and carried 7.5-inch guns. Mr. Hughes' proposal may have been designed to allow the British to retain these four cruisers.<sup>16</sup> This provision in regard to 10,000-ton 8-inch gun cruisers, instead of assisting in cruiser limitation seems to have

12. *Ibid.*, p. 576.

13. *Cf.* p. 183.

14. *Cf.* Simonds, F. *How Europe Made Peace Without America*. Chap. 13.

A French view of the Washington Conference is that while Great Britain was willing to accept a position of equality with the United States, it was only on condition that her supremacy over France and Italy combined be recognized. While France accepted this contention in capital ships, she declined to accept it in submarines. *Rapport, Budget Général de l'Exercice, 1929* (Ministère de la Marine), No. 612, *Chambre des Députés, 1928*, p. 40.

15. *Conference*, cited, p. 578.

16. This is the belief of Senator Hale. *Cong. Record*, Jan. 3, 1929, p. 1082. One unverified report states that some British delegates opposed this high limit upon the ground that with the exception of the *Hawkins* cruisers, all the British cruisers were under 6,000 tons and carried 6-inch guns. *The Round Table*, March 1928, p. 226.

9. *Conference*, cited, p. 80 ff.

10. *Ibid.*, p. 460, 466.

11. *Ibid.*, p. 518.

been a fundamental factor in causing renewed competition following the conference.

A British naval writer states, "It is morally certain that but for the stimulus which the Treaty gave to their development, most if not all of the cruisers now under construction would have been vessels of less than 7,500 tons."<sup>17</sup>

The building of 10,000-ton 8-inch gun cruisers began almost simultaneously in several countries. In 1924 France, Japan and the British Empire all laid down so-called Treaty cruisers.<sup>18</sup> A bill authorizing the construction of eight such vessels was introduced in the United States Congress on April 15, 1924 and enacted in December of the same year.<sup>19</sup> While two of these cruisers were laid down in 1926,<sup>20</sup> the keels of the remaining six were not laid down until after the Geneva Naval Conference in 1927.

#### THE BRITISH CRUISER PROGRAM

To understand the British cruiser situation, it is necessary to remember that in 1914 there were 114 cruisers in the British navy.<sup>21</sup> Many of these cruisers became obsolete during the war, and while some replacements were made the British navy had less than half this number, or 56 cruisers, in April 1921. In January 1923 Mr. Amery, First Lord of the Admiralty in the Conservative government, declared that practically all of the light cruisers would become obsolete in the next twelve years. To replace such cruisers, it would be necessary to lay down "in the course of the next ten years a total of some fifty-two cruisers in all—an average, in other words, of five a year." But in order to relieve the country of part of the burden of cruiser replacement before 1931, when battleship replacement under the Washington treaty was to begin, the Conservative party proposed to lay down immediately eight cruisers of the Treaty type.<sup>22</sup>

Before the work of construction could be begun, the Baldwin government was suc-

ceeded by a Labour government under Ramsay MacDonald, and in February 1924 the new government announced that it had decided, "in view of the serious unemployment, to proceed with the laying down of five cruisers. . . ."<sup>23</sup> This announcement led to a vigorous debate, in which Prime Minister MacDonald declared that these five cruisers were "purely for replacement purposes."<sup>24</sup>

On March 18, 1924 the Liberal party moved a resolution stating that the construction of five new cruisers was not justified either on the ground of relieving unemployment or of providing for the naval needs of the Empire, and was calculated to increase competition in armaments.<sup>25</sup> In the debate, Captain Benn stated that it was camouflage to talk about replacing an old cruiser that cost £900,000 with a new cruiser costing £2,000,000. Representatives of the government replied that this replacement program was smaller than that of the previous (Conservative) government and that the plan had nothing to do primarily with the question of unemployment.<sup>26</sup> The Labour and the Conservative parties combined to defeat the Liberal party resolution by a vote of 304 to 114.

Following the General Elections of November 1924, the Conservative government returned to power, and after some disagreement within the Cabinet and the appointment of a Committee of Inquiry under the Earl of Birkenhead, adopted a definite building program. On July 27, 1925 the government announced a schedule of new construction which called for the laying down of sixteen 8-inch gun cruisers during the next five years (by 1929-1930), nine being 10,000-ton and seven 8,000-ton cruisers.<sup>27</sup> The total cost of this program, which included other items, was placed at £58,000,000. Two days later the government introduced supplementary naval estimates to put this program into effect. Ramsay MacDonald immediately moved to reduce the naval vote, declaring that it had not been the intention of the Labour government to lay down five new cruisers every year. In the first year, he said, as a result of pressure from the Admiralty,

17. Bywater, H. *Navies and Nations* (1927), p. 48.

18. *Fleets (The British Empire and Foreign Countries)*, Cmd. 3277, p. 11, 15, 17.

19. *Cong. Record*, 1924, Vol. 65, p. 6448.

20. *New York Times*, December 19, 1926, 2:2.

21. Lord Jellicoe's remarks, *Records of the Conference for the Limitation of Naval Armament*, Geneva, 1927, p. 29.

22. Hurd, Sir Archibald. "Broken Pledges and Lost Cruisers," *The Nineteenth Century and After*, February 1929.

23. *House of Commons Debates*, February 21, 1924, col. 1973.

24. *Ibid.*, col. 2131.

25. *Ibid.*, March 18, 1924, col. 326.

26. *Ibid.*, col. 399.

27. *Navy: Programme of New Construction*, 1925, Cmd. 2476.

"... we decided to build these five cruisers instead of the eight that were asked for. We stated at the time that that was not to be taken as anything more than a very hurried, a very improvisational decision, on account of the pressure that was brought to bear upon us, that we had not time to consider what the program ought to be, but that we were not going to allow matters simply to drift, that we did not believe in a policy of disarmament by inaction and neglect, that meantime, holding that position, we would make our inquiries and that next year—that is this year—we would make ourselves responsible for a program which, whatever it was, we should defend upon its merits."<sup>28</sup>

The Labour opposition declared that laying down this program on the ground that the Empire was building up to a one-power standard would mean "competitive armaments." Referring to the replacement by small cruisers of the 10,000-ton type, Mr. MacDonald added, "My view is that the program is the beginning of new war preparations, and is not merely a replacement program at all. . . . There is no known danger facing us that justifies this program."<sup>29</sup> Mr. MacDonald's motion was defeated by a vote of 267 to 140.

By the beginning of 1927 the British Government had actually laid down thirteen Treaty cruisers, in comparison with four for Japan, three for France, two for Italy and two for the United States.<sup>30</sup>

#### THE LEAGUE PREPARATORY COMMISSION

Meanwhile various governments had been attempting, through the League of Nations, to work out a basis for general reduction of armament on land as well as on sea. In September 1925 the League Council had established a Preparatory Commission for a Disarmament Conference,<sup>31</sup> in which the United States participated. This body held three sessions between May 1926 and April 1927. At the meetings of the Preparatory Commission one group, led by Great Britain and the United States, believed that naval limitation could be arrived at independently of land limitation; as far as navies were concerned, it believed that limitation should

be made by categories—that is, the number and tonnage of battleships, cruisers (of all kinds), destroyers and submarines should be definitely fixed. A second group, headed by France, contended that naval and land disarmament were interdependent, and that as far as naval disarmament was concerned the principle of global tonnage—that is, the total tonnage for the navy as a whole—should be followed, but each State should be free within this general limitation to allocate tonnage between different types of vessels as it saw fit. If a State wished to concentrate its tonnage upon cruisers or submarines, it should be allowed to do so.<sup>32</sup> The French thesis of global tonnage was defended by M. Paul-Boncour, on the ground that limitation by categories would "stereotype" a navy. The great naval powers, having a supremacy in capital ships, could afford to do this, but the other powers, such as France, must be prepared to take advantage of every change in naval technique. France was opposed also to limitation by category on financial grounds and for reasons of security.<sup>33</sup> Italy supported this position.

The British delegation declared that it was necessary to limit numbers, as well as the size of ships and the calibre of guns, and was supported by the United States delegation. Mr. Gibson declared at the third session that the

"... provision allowing each country to be free to distribute and arrange the total tonnage allowed to it, without providing in the agreement for the allocation of such tonnage, contains the germ of eventual competition. Such an application would not lessen international suspicion, uneasiness and mistrust; indeed, it is hard to imagine any system which would tend to create suspicion and mistrust more than secret building programs conceived and laid down under such loose conditions."<sup>34</sup>

On April 11, 1927, in an attempt to compromise these differences, the French delegation introduced a modified proposal which provided that tonnage should be divided into four categories: capital ships, aircraft carriers, surface vessels under 10,000 tons, and submarines. But each government, while keeping within the limits of the total

28. *House of Commons Debates*, July 29, 1925, col. 466.

29. *Ibid.*, col. 471, 472.

30. Excluding for the British cruiser of 8,400 tons, *Records*, cited, p. 138, 147, 154. Cf. also *Fleets*, cited.

31. League of Nations, *Official Journal*, February 1926, p. 168.

32. For a summary, cf. "The Disarmament Deadlock," *F. P. A. Information Service*, Vol. IV, No. 19.

33. *Minutes of the Third Session of the Preparatory Commission*, C. 310, M. 109, 1927, IV, p. 170.

34. *Ibid.*, p. 172.

tonnage of these four classes, could alter such division as it deemed necessary for its security, subject to informing the Secretariat of the League of Nations of the changes effected in the division of its total tonnage at least one year before laying down that portion of the tonnage which was to be transferred.<sup>35</sup> It is understood that in in-

formal conversations it was proposed that the transfer of tonnage from one category to another be restricted to a certain percentage of the tonnage of that class.<sup>36</sup>

This proposal was not accepted at the time by the British and American delegations, and the session terminated without definite results having been achieved.<sup>37</sup>

### THE GENEVA NAVAL CONFERENCE OF 1927

In the belief that limitation of cruisers and other auxiliaries might be achieved separately, without waiting for the general Disarmament Conference, President Coolidge (in February 1927) invited the British Empire, Japan, France and Italy to participate in a five-power naval conference at Geneva. Only the British Empire and Japan accepted the invitation, France and Italy declining for reasons similar to those which led them to oppose the British-American thesis in the Preparatory Commission.<sup>38</sup>

The conference convened in Geneva in June 1927. The delegations of the participating governments were composed of both civilians and naval officers, with the latter predominating. One of the two delegates of the United States was an admiral. In addition there were eight naval advisers to the American delegation. Two of the four delegates of Great Britain were admirals, and the third was the First Lord of the Admiralty. Attached to the delegation were five army and navy officers. Canada and Australia each had a naval officer in their delegations. New Zealand was represented by two British admirals. One of the two Japanese delegates was an admiral, while sixteen naval and military officers were attached to the delegation. Out of a total of sixty-four delegates and advisers, thirty-seven were naval or military officers.<sup>39</sup>

In his speech before the Pilgrims' Society on June 18, 1929, Ambassador Dawes declared that the reason for the failure of the Geneva Conference, in his opinion, was because the delegates were both civilians and

naval officers. He believed that in the future the negotiation of a naval agreement should be placed in the hands of statesmen. Continuing, he said:

"The proper pride of a naval officer's life is his navy. His whole professional career impels him to think of the navy only in terms of victory. He not only instinctively feels, but he is rightly taught the feeling, that he must strive not for equal navies, but for a superior navy.

"It is difficult for him to forget that with a superior navy victory is probable—with an equal navy, doubtful; with an inferior navy, almost hopeless. Other things being equal, I fear no naval officer even inherently favors equality."

The Geneva Conference broke up on August 4 without having arrived at any agreement on the major question of cruiser limitation. In the technical committee provisional agreements were reached on the characteristics and replacement ages of destroyers and submarines, but no total numbers or tonnage figures were submitted to the full conference, and no final agreement was adopted following failure to reach a settlement on cruisers. Here there was a complete deadlock.

### PROPOSALS OF THE THREE GOVERNMENTS

The proposals of the three governments were briefly as follows:<sup>40</sup>

The American delegation presented the view that, within total tonnage limitations, which they initially suggested should be between 250,000 and 300,000 tons in the cruiser class for the United States and the British Empire and between 150,000 and 180,000 tons for Japan, each of the powers should have liberty to build the number and type of vessels which they might consider best suited to their respective naval needs, with freedom, subject to the limitation of

35. *Ibid.*, p. 225.

36. Cf. Ambassador Gibson's speech, Sixth Session, Preparatory Commission, April 22, 1929.

37. The United States, after the failure of the Geneva Conference, accepted the French compromise, cf. p. 183.

38. France and Italy were represented by observers. For a history of this conference, cf. "The International Naval Situation," F. P. A. *Information Service*, Vol. III, No. 21-22. Cf. also *Records*, cited.

39. The First Lord of the Admiralty is not counted as a naval officer.

40. *Records*, cited, p. 45.

the Washington Conference, to arm these vessels as they saw fit.

The British delegates opposed the principle of limitation by total tonnage alone on the ground that the largest ship and the heaviest gun permissible (10,000-ton, 8-inch gun) would inevitably become the standard. At the same time they proposed a limitation of the *size* of vessels of all classes, including capital ships. The British delegation suggested first, a strict limitation of the number of 10,000-ton 8-inch gun cruisers, and second, the establishment of a secondary type of 6,000 tons carrying 6-inch guns. They contended that the establishment of this type would alone enable the British Empire, within a moderate total tonnage figure, to attain the numbers which it regarded indispensable to meet its special needs. The British Government stated their minimum requirements to be fifteen 8-inch gun cruisers and fifty-five cruisers of the smaller type carrying 6-inch guns—a total of seventy.<sup>41</sup>

The Japanese delegation advocated the adoption of the lowest possible tonnage levels. They would not agree to any limitation of 8-inch gun cruisers as a matter of principle, but were willing to declare that they would not build any further 8-inch gun cruisers except those already authorized, provided Japan were given a total tonnage of at least 315,000 tons for cruisers and destroyers combined.

In replying to the British proposals, the American delegation declared that it could not agree to limit the 8-inch gun to large cruisers because of the fact that the British Government had at its disposal approximately 888,000 tons of fast merchant ships capable of being readily converted into cruisers with 6-inch guns. It could not agree to limit the number of 10,000-ton cruisers to less than twenty-five because, unlike the British Empire, the United States did not have a large number of naval bases strategically situated with respect to its trade routes. Small cruisers were of no use to the United States because of their restricted cruising radius.

41. *Ibid.*, p. 29, 142. During the conference Great Britain offered to discuss a lower figure provided the United States agreed to a total of eleven large 8-inch gun cruisers. This the American delegation refused to do. *Ibid.*, p. 38, 39.

#### NEAREST APPROACH TO AGREEMENT

The nearest approach to agreement came when the British and Japanese delegations, at Mr. Gibson's suggestion, arrived at a compromise figure of 500,000 tons for destroyers and cruisers combined, plus the retention of 25 per cent in old vessels of limited combatant value. This compromise included a limitation of 10,000-ton cruisers to twelve for the United States and Great Britain and eight for Japan. Omitting the tonnage of the old vessels retained, the figure of 500,000 tons was not far removed from the minimum figure of 450,000 tons originally proposed for cruisers and destroyers by the United States, and was less than the maximum figure.

The United States rejected this proposal on the ground that, in view of the inclusion of over-age ships, it would really mean a tonnage limitation for cruisers of at least 426,000 tons—75,000 tons in excess of British cruiser strength after the completion of vessels under construction. Mr. Gibson declared that for the immediate future the only real effect of the British proposals would be to obligate the United States to construct many 6,000-ton 6-inch gun cruisers, a type not adapted to American "needs."<sup>42</sup>

On July 5 the United States modified its original position by offering to limit cruisers to 400,000 tons (instead of the maximum of 300,000 tons originally proposed). But it required full liberty of action to build twenty-five 10,000-ton cruisers; and while in addition it was willing to construct cruisers of a smaller tonnage, it would not agree to mount cruisers with guns of less than 8-inch calibre.<sup>43</sup>

Back of these concrete differences over the number of cruisers and the size of guns was the difference in conception of naval needs. The British delegation upheld a conception of "absolute" needs—of a certain number and type of vessels which it was necessary to maintain to safeguard Imperial communications, regardless of the size of other navies. The United States declared, on the other hand, that naval needs were relative;

42. *Ibid.*, p. 44.

43. *Ibid.*, p. 109.

that the number of vessels required by one navy depended upon the number of vessels maintained by others. Nevertheless, in insisting rigidly upon the right to build 8-inch gun cruisers, regardless of the number of such cruisers in other navies, the United States seemed itself to have supported the theory of "absolute" needs.

The failure of the Geneva Conference inevitably caused irritation and, to a certain extent, strained relations between the United States and Great Britain. In December 1927 the Committee on Naval Affairs of the House of Representatives introduced a bill calling for the construction of twenty-five cruisers, as well as nine destroyer leaders, thirty-two submarines and five aircraft carriers, at a total cost of \$725,000,000. After vigorous opposition from virtually all parts of the country, the House passed a bill calling only for the authorization of fifteen large cruisers and one aircraft carrier, at an estimated total cost of \$274,000,000. The Senate finally approved this bill in February 1929 after rejecting the proposal of President Coolidge to remove the time-limit within which these cruisers should be laid down. The bill as passed requires that all of the fifteen 8-inch gun cruisers shall be laid down by July 1, 1931, which means that they will be completed by 1934 or 1935.<sup>44</sup> It also authorizes the President to suspend construction in the event that an international agreement for further naval limitation is concluded.

Following the Geneva Conference, the British Government decided to drop three of the large cruisers from the five-year program.<sup>45</sup> In 1929 it reduced two of the three cruisers to be laid down from 8-inch to 6-inch gun types.

#### THE ANGLO-FRENCH NAVAL COMPROMISE

Confronted by a deadlock in the Preparatory Commission and the failure of the Ge-

neva Conference, the French and British Governments now attempted to work out a compromise. In March 1928 conversations took place between Sir Austen Chamberlain and M. Briand at Geneva, where Sir Austen presented a proposal of the British Admiralty to divide vessels into six categories.<sup>46</sup> On March 22 Count Clauzel informed the Preparatory Commission (at its fifth session) that technical experts had been conducting conversations dealing with delicate questions "for which only partial solutions had been found" by the commission. The next day Ambassador Gibson of the United States declared that the American delegation believed so many points of disagreement existed that nothing further could be accomplished in public meetings until after "an effort had been made by direct negotiation between the various governments and between groups of governments to find a way, through mutual concession, to eliminate existing divergencies."<sup>47</sup> Negotiations between the French and British Governments were subsequently continued, and on July 28, 1928 both governments finally agreed to apply limitation to four classes of vessels, which would have "added two further classes of vessels to the two classes limited under the Washington Treaty."<sup>48</sup> In addition to limiting capital ships and aircraft carriers, the Anglo-French Naval Compromise proposed to limit cruisers armed with guns of more than 6-inch calibre and submarines of over 600 tons, leaving the parties free to construct smaller cruisers and smaller submarines.

In consenting to the limitation of these two types of vessel, the French Government thus surrendered its theory of global tonnage in favor of limitation by category; while in consenting to carry on negotiations in regard to the navy alone, it abandoned the thesis that naval, land and air armaments were interdependent, thus removing two of the major difficulties encountered by the Preparatory Commission.<sup>49</sup>

At the request of the French Government,

44. The bill provided that the first five cruisers and the aircraft carriers should be laid down in the year ending June 30, 1929.

45. *Brassey's Naval and Shipping Annual, 1929*, p. 2. Commenting on this fact, the late Sir Archibald Hurd said, "The program which was adopted in 1925, a far more modest program than that sketched by Mr. Amery, has gone by the board, and we are face to face with a policy of naval defence at once 'chaotic, sporadic and spasmodic.' Year by year the policy of replacement is being pared down." "Broken Pledges and Lost Cruisers," cited, p. 158.

46. It proposed to limit the number of cruisers between 10,000 and 7,000 tons and surface vessels under 7,000 tons. British Circular Dispatch, October 9, 1928, Cmd. 3211, p. 17.

47. *Minutes of the Fifth Session of the Preparatory Commission*, C. 165, M. 50, 1928, IX, p. 277, 278.

48. Cmd. 3211, cited, p. 43.

49. For the British surrender on the limitation of land reserves, cf. "The Disarmament Deadlock," cited, p. 393.

the compromise also contained the interesting and important provision that the same maximum tonnage for submarines and cruisers should be fixed for *all* the great naval powers. Thus the claim of France for equality with the United States and Great Britain was recognized by the latter and any controversy between France or Italy as to their respective ratios would have been avoided.<sup>50</sup> France, however, apparently did not expect to build up to the maximum figure, which M. Briand has called *chiffres de prestige*. The Anglo-French Naval Compromise provided that at the naval conference the powers should indicate within the maximum limit "the tonnage they propose to reach and which they undertake not to exceed during the period covered by the convention."<sup>51</sup> In other words, while equality in tonnage was recognized in theory, the lesser powers would agree not to build up to the maximum level.

The French Government declared that the compromise could only bear fruit if the United States in particular agreed to accept it, and it was accordingly communicated to the other powers concerned. On July 30 the British Government instructed its representatives at Washington, Tokyo and Rome to inform the respective governments to which they were accredited of the terms of the compromise. On the same day, and apparently before the embassies had had time to inform the governments, Sir Austen Chamberlain announced in the House of

Commons that these conversations with France had been proceeding. He declared, "I am about to communicate to the other principal naval powers the compromise at which we have arrived. . . ."

This statement aroused a storm of disapproval in the United States, where the press intimated that the negotiations had been carried on without the knowledge of the United States. The provision for the limitation of only large cruisers and large submarines was criticized on the ground that it was an obvious attempt to win France to the policy held by Great Britain at the Geneva Conference. The reply of the United States to the compromise was given in a note of September 28, 1928, which declared that the Anglo-French proposal imposed restrictions only on those types of vessels "peculiarly suited to the needs of the United States." Restrictions on these types "would add enormously to the comparative offensive power of a nation possessing a large merchant tonnage on which preparation may be made in times of peace for mounting 6-inch guns." Finally, the United States declared its willingness to consider the proposal offered by the French at the third session of the Preparatory Commission in regard to fluctuating tonnages.<sup>52</sup> In view of this reply, Lord Cushendun announced in the House of Lords on November 7, 1928 that the Anglo-French Compromise was dead.

### APPLICATION OF THE NEW "YARDSTICK" FORMULA

A new atmosphere was created by the events of the early months of 1929. On March 4 Herbert Hoover became President of the United States and promptly made known his willingness to reopen the naval question. In England the Conservative government was voted out of power in the General Election of May 30, 1929, and was succeeded by a Labour government under Ramsay MacDonald who had stressed in his election campaign the importance of improving Anglo-American relations.

In addition to removing much of the psychological ill will existing between England and the United States, Mr. Gibson in his speech of April 22, 1929 at Geneva offered on behalf of the United States two technical suggestions of significance. First, he reiterated the willingness of the United States to accept the French formula of fluctuating tonnages between categories, subject to a certain percentage limitation. Second, he declared that "in order to arrive at a basis of comparison in the case of categories in which there are marked variations as to unit

50. Cf. p. 190.

51. Cmd. 3211, cited, p. 27.

52. Cf. below.

characteristics, it might be desirable in arriving at a formula for estimating equivalent tonnage to consider certain factors which produce these variations, such as age, unit displacement, and calibre of guns." It was understood that he favored a system of index numbers under which, for example, a new 10,000-ton 8-inch gun cruiser might be listed at 100, a 7,500-ton 6-inch gun cruiser at 60, and other vessels accordingly.

On April 27 Sir Austen Chamberlain declared that Mr. Gibson's speech paved the way for a "real advance."<sup>53</sup>

It is recognized, however, that if a naval agreement is to be arrived at, it will be necessary to remove the difficulties which led to the deadlock at the Geneva Conference of 1927 over the questions of tonnage levels and the 8-inch gun. Before reviewing the possibility of avoiding these difficulties, the present naval strength and programs of the United States and the British Empire may be briefly described.

The comparative strength of the five leading powers in auxiliary vessels is shown in the following table:

### SHIPS NOT LIMITED BY WASHINGTON TREATY<sup>1</sup>

Type	U. S.		British Empire		Japan		France		Italy	
	No.	Tons	No.	Tons	No.	Tons	No.	Tons	No.	Tons
<b>Cruisers, First Line</b>										
<b>8" gun Cruisers</b>										
Built .....	2 <sup>2</sup>	20,000	10	100,000	5	38,400	2	19,882	3	31,355 <sup>4</sup>
Building .....	6	60,000	7	66,600 <sup>3</sup>	6	60,000	3	30,000	2	20,000
Authorized .....	15	150,000	1	10,000	1	10,000	—	—	2	20,000
<b>6"—7.5" Gun Cruisers</b>										
Built .....	10	75,000	44	217,890 <sup>5</sup>	21	105,555	10	83,001 <sup>6</sup>	9	36,015
Building .....	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	4	20,000
Authorized .....	—	—	2	13,000 <sup>7</sup>	—	—	1	6,496	—	—
Total .....	33	305,000	64	407,490	33	213,955	16	139,379	20	127,370
<b>Cruisers, Second Line</b>										
Built .....	22	179,425	—	—	9	71,434	6	64,770	1	7,234
<b>Destroyers, First Line</b>										
262 <sup>8</sup>	312,479	184	228,370	115	135,460	78	110,490	89	106,314	
<b>Submarines, First Line</b>										
Built .....	112	83,607	56	47,705	62	58,417	52	40,656	37	15,243
Building .....	2	5,520	12	18,480	9	14,670	32	40,331	19	17,000
Authorized .....	—	—	6	9,240	4	6,920	4	2,480	6	4,368
Total .....	114	89,127	74	75,425	75	80,007	88	83,467	62	36,611

### PRESENT RATIOS IN AUXILIARY VESSELS<sup>9</sup>

	Cruisers, First Line	Destroyers, First Line	Submarines
United States .....	5	5	5
British Empire .....	6.61	3.65	4.23
Japan .....	3.51	2.17	4.48
France .....	2.28	1.77	4.68
Italy .....	2.09	1.70	2.05

1. Compiled by the Foreign Policy Association from "Navies of the World," printed for the use of the Committee on Naval Affairs, U. S. Senate, Government Printing Office, Washington, D. C., 1929; brought up to date by reference to Parliamentary Debates, official Announcements, etc.

2. Launched but not yet in commission.

3. Tonnage not definitely determined.

4. These cruisers, built in 1909-1910, are armed with 10-inch guns.

5. Four cruisers of *Hawkins* class, armed with 7.5-inch guns.

6. Four cruisers armed with less than 6-inch guns.

7. Tonnage not yet officially announced.

8. Does not include 12 first-line destroyers in Coast Guard.

9. Including ships building and authorized.

### COMPARATIVE STRENGTH OF BRITISH AND AMERICAN FLEETS

With the completion of the fifteen cruisers authorized in the act of February 1929, the United States will have thirty-three first-line cruisers, totaling 305,000 tons; in addition it still retains twenty-two second-line cruisers laid down between 1890 and 1905. All have passed the 20-year age limit and only six are in commission, four being on duty in the Special Service Squadron in the Caribbean, one in the Asiatic fleet, and one at the New York Navy Yard.<sup>54</sup>

While the American navy is inferior to the British in first-line-cruiser tonnage, it is superior, as the above table indicates, in destroyer and submarine tonnage. The United States has 262 first-line destroyers and although only 106 are in commission the others are kept in good condition and are ready for use in emergency. With very few exceptions, these destroyers were all built during the war and will reach the age limit of sixteen years by 1938.

In a speech of January 3, 1929 Senator Hale declared:

"At the close of the World War we found ourselves with a large number of surplus destroyers on hand. These ships had been constructed by us on the suggestion of our allies, the British, to aid in putting down the submarine menace. At that time, as at the present time, we were very greatly lacking in cruisers; but with our surplus destroyer force, to a very considerable extent, we were able to make up for this deficiency by using destroyers for cruiser work. . . . The destroyer at that time, with its great speed of 34 to 35 knots, could keep out of the way of these small cruisers and could be effectively used in doing near-by scouting and screening work for the fleet. With the advent of the treaty cruiser and of small cruisers of great speed our superiority in destroyer tonnage becomes no longer the compensatory factor that it was at the end of the war in making up for our lack of cruisers."<sup>55</sup>

At the present time the British cruiser fleet consists of a total of 64 ships—built, building and authorized. A majority of the completed cruisers are of the small 6-inch gun type, ranging between 3,750 and 5,250 tons, but when the building program is completed Great Britain will have eighteen

cruisers armed with 8-inch guns.<sup>56</sup> During the next few years, however, as the replacement program goes ahead, the total number of ships will decrease from the 64 built and building to about fifty actually built. Thirty of these cruisers become obsolete between 1935 and 1940, with as many as seven in 1937 and eight in 1938. If Great Britain should wait until the actual year of obsolescence before replacement, the program for that year would be excessive. In his speech of March 14, 1929, Mr. Bridgeman, First Lord of the Admiralty, declared:

"If our building program suddenly increased very much in size, everybody would be asking what was the reason for it and suspicion would be created. Apart from that, the fluctuations in employment which would result from a policy of spasmodic building, building by fits and starts, would entirely upset our plans for stabilizing employment in the Royal yards, and might also have the effect of causing the departure of some of our most highly-skilled workmen from the shipbuilding yards in other parts of the country."<sup>57</sup>

Since 1924, therefore, the policy of the British Government has been to lay down about three ships a year, so that by 1940 the new ships laid down will approximately equal those becoming obsolete during the same period. Mr. Bridgeman stated that at the present time there are fifty-two British cruisers in commission, and, according to the present replacement program, there would be only fifty cruisers under twenty years of age in 1940.<sup>58</sup>

### APPROXIMATE EQUALITY OF TWO LEADING NAVIES

In February 1929 Congressman Fred Britten, chairman of the House Committee on Naval Affairs and a leader of the "big Navy" group in the United States, wrote that the completion of the fifteen American cruisers authorized in 1929 "will, unless Great Britain or Japan expand their naval programs, place the United States navy on a basis somewhere near equality with any other naval force it might be called upon to meet."<sup>59</sup>

56. Including the *York* and the *Exeter*, of 8,400 tons each. In addition, the British Government has four cruisers of the *Hawkins* class, carrying 7.5-inch guns.

57. *House of Commons Debates*, March 14, 1929, col. 1310.

58. *Ibid.*, March 14, 1929, col. 1310.

59. *New York Herald Tribune Magazine*, February 21, 1929.

54. Navy Department Statement, *U. S. Daily*, June 27, 1929.

55. *Cong. Record*, January 3, 1929.

This statement is borne out by a comparison of the two fleets. On completion of the present building program in 1940, at least eighteen of the 50 British cruisers will be 8-inch gun ships. The remainder, or thirty-two, will presumably be smaller 6-inch gun cruisers of approximately 6,500 tons each.<sup>60</sup> According to this ratio of large and small ships the British Government will have 176,600 tons in 8-inch gun cruisers and at least 208,000 tons in 6-inch gun cruisers—or a total of 384,600 tons. These figures are based on Mr. Bridgeman's statement on the naval estimates, quoted above,<sup>61</sup> and are not of course final. The present Labour government or another Conservative government might alter the present replacement program in either direction at any time during the next ten years.

By 1940, under the present program, the United States will have ten 7,500-ton 6-inch gun cruisers, totalling 75,000 tons, and twenty-three large 8-inch gun cruisers, totalling 230,000 tons—or 305,000 tons in all. In other words, the British Empire will have a cruiser superiority of 79,600 tons.

On the other hand, the United States will have a superiority of five large 8-inch gun cruisers. In addition, the United States has at the present time a superiority in destroyers of 84,109 tons and in submarines of 13,702 tons<sup>62</sup>—or a total superiority in destroyers and submarines of 97,811 tons, which about offsets the British superiority in cruiser tonnage.

Disregarding other factors it is clear that by 1940 the American fleet will at least equal the British fleet in tonnage and will definitely surpass it in the number of Treaty cruisers. This assumes, however, that the fifteen American cruisers authorized in 1929 are built and put in commission and that the British Government does not increase the number of 8-inch gun cruisers now building or projected.<sup>64</sup>

60. At Geneva the British Government declared its willingness to stop further construction of large cruisers. Presumably, therefore, the 7.5-inch gun cruisers of the *Hawkins* class will be replaced with 6-inch gun vessels, and those which reach the age limit, after 1940 will also be included in the total of 32 ships.

61. Cf. p. 185.

63. Including the British destroyers and submarines now building and appropriated for.

64. Cf. p. 178. It also assumes that Great Britain will replace the cruisers of the *Hawkins* class with 6-inch gun ships.

The inclusion of the American destroyer figures in these calculations might be criticized on the ground that less than one-half of these destroyers are in commission and that the United States built during the war more destroyers than it needs at the present time. Nevertheless, if the statement is true that destroyers are an effective weapon in combatting small cruisers, these vessels cannot be left out of consideration as a factor in the naval strength of the United States in the event of war.<sup>65</sup>

#### A POSSIBLE BASIS FOR AGREEMENT

If the French suggestion for transferring a certain percentage of destroyer and cruiser tonnage to meet the needs of the different countries<sup>67</sup> should be combined with the American "yardstick" proposals at Geneva, a limitation agreement might be reached without great sacrifice. At the Geneva Conference the United States proposed a total limitation of 450,000 to 550,000 tons in cruisers and destroyers combined for the British Empire and the United States. At the present time the United States has a total of 617,479 tons in first-line cruisers and destroyers combined, which would mean that under the maximum figures proposed at Geneva the United States would be called upon to scrap 67,479 tons. The British Empire with a total tonnage of 635,860 tons in cruisers and destroyers would be called upon to scrap 85,860 tons. This tonnage could be disposed of in either cruisers or destroyers. The United States would be free to scrap its tonnage in destroyers if it chose, which would mean approximately fifty-seven destroyers in all. Inasmuch as only 106 out of the 262 American destroyers are in commission, the scrapping of fifty-seven would not involve a material sacrifice, and would still leave the American destroyer fleet slightly superior to the British in tonnage.<sup>68</sup>

Great Britain, on the other hand, would be able to scrap at once approximately seventeen of its older cruisers, totalling 86,000 tons. As thirty cruisers will normally be

65. In proposing a destroyer tonnage of 200,000 to 250,000 tons at the 1927 Geneva Conference, the United States indicated that destroyers are an important part of the navy.

67. Accepted in principle by the United States at the sixth meeting of the Preparatory Commission. Cf. p. 179.

68. This would probably be offset by the fact that the United States has no destroyer leaders at the present time, while Great Britain has seventeen in commission.

come obsolete by 1940, scrapping seventeen in the immediate future would make the replacement program of three cruisers a year correspond more closely with the maturity date of the old cruisers. This scrapping proposal would not involve stopping work on cruisers under construction and on which men are employed. In numbers, it would leave the British fleet with forty-seven cruisers today, only three less than the number planned for 1940 on completion of replacements. The British Empire should, however, retain the right to continue to lay down for replacement purposes three new cruisers a year, just as the United States should retain the right to construct its fifteen large cruisers, in accordance with the replacement formula described below.

In other words, a scrapping agreement under some such formula as this would not impose a serious sacrifice upon either government, but would lay the basis for agreement on a replacement ratio for the future. Actual scrapping of 8-inch gun cruisers under construction or planned would apparently raise greater difficulties. While the British Government might agree to drop work on, say, five of its Treaty cruisers now under construction if the United States would agree not to lay down an equal number of its authorized 10,000-ton ships, it would be forced to shoulder a greater financial loss than the United States, simply because construction of the large British cruisers is well under way while that of the last fifteen American cruisers is only beginning.<sup>69</sup> The number of men who would be thrown out of work by dropping construction would be a further embarrassment to the present Labour government.<sup>70</sup>

#### THE "YARDSTICK" APPLIED TO CRUISERS AND DESTROYERS

The mere scrapping of ships, however, will not solve the cruiser problem as a whole unless combined with an agreement on future building and replacement. It is in this connection that the American proposal for a "yardstick" to measure the relative effectiveness of large and small cruisers and to

take into account gun power, age and speed, offers a useful formula for reaching an agreement.

At the Geneva Conference the United States was not ready to admit that 250,000 to 300,000 tons in large 8-inch gun cruisers had a greater combat strength than the same tonnage in smaller 6-inch gun cruisers. According to this reasoning a fleet consisting of twenty-five or thirty 10,000-ton cruisers would be equal to a fleet consisting of forty or fifty 6,000-ton cruisers. The British delegation contended, however, that the fleet of large ships would, because of its superior gun power, be able to wipe out the fleet of small vessels. In Mr. Gibson's speech at Geneva on April 22, 1929, the United States indicated that it was now prepared to consider gun power as well as total tonnage in estimating comparative strength, that it was also willing to allow one government to use a certain percentage of its destroyer tonnage for cruisers, provided the destroyer tonnage is accordingly reduced.

The actual difference between the 10,000-ton 8-inch gun cruiser and the 6,500-ton 6-inch gun cruiser is only 3,500 tons; but the British Government has contended that actually one large cruiser is worth more than two small cruisers, or even 2.5, in combat strength. Expressed in other terms, the large and small cruisers would have a ratio of 10:4 respectively. Similarly one small cruiser might be considered the equivalent of three or four destroyers. If the latter were chosen, the ratio of large cruisers, small cruisers and destroyers would then be approximately 10:4:1. Other ratios of course may be worked out by naval technicians but these given here illustrate the way in which they may be applied, and indicate roughly the results which might be achieved.

Under this ratio the twenty-three large 8-inch gun cruisers of the United States would have a rating of 230, the ten smaller 6-inch gun cruisers would have a rating of 40—a total of 270 units. When the present British program is completed Great Britain will have eighteen large 8-inch gun cruisers with a rating of 180, and thirty-two small 6-inch gun cruisers with a rating of 128—or a total of 308 units. The difference between these two ratings might then be ad-

69. Up to April 1, 1929 the British Government had expended more than \$34,000,000 on the *Shropshire*, *York*, *Dorsetshire*, *Norfolk* and *Exeter*. *Naval Estimates*, 1929, p. 330.

70. For the relation of unemployment to cruiser construction in 1924, cf. p. 178. In 1929 a total of 31,260 men were employed at British Government Naval Yards. *Ibid.*, p. 430.

justed by deducting thirty-eight units from the British destroyer fleet, or allowing the American fleet a similar superiority. The result would leave the two fleets essentially equal in combat strength.

The factor of age will probably be more difficult to work out in the case of cruisers than it was in the case of battleships at the Washington Conference. While the two battle fleets were more nearly comparative in age, the American and British cruisers of today differ widely. For example, practically all of the small British cruisers will become obsolete by 1940 and will, under the present program, be replaced with new ships by that date. On the other hand, not one of the thirty-three first-line cruisers of the United States will have reached the age limit by 1940. The 6-inch gun cruisers of the *Omaha* class will be the first to reach the age limit, beginning in 1943.<sup>71</sup> Under the system proposed by Mr. Gibson at Geneva, it is not possible to state what "weight" will be given the older ships as compared with those of newer design. It is possible that in order to offset their advantage in age the British might agree to permit the United States to construct one or two additional cruisers in 1940 or to cut down their own program to this extent. This factor as well as the relative speed of the two fleets will have to be accounted for in the final plan.

To summarize the existing possibilities for agreement outlined above:

The United States might scrap about fifty-seven destroyers (already out of commission), and Great Britain about seventeen old cruisers which will reach the age limit between 1935-1940. This would provide tonnage equality in cruisers and destroyers at the time, but would allow both governments to complete their announced cruiser programs as follows:

1. The United States to continue its present cruiser-building program of twenty-three large 8-inch gun cruisers and ten 6-inch gun cruisers.
2. The British Empire to continue its present cruiser-building program of eighteen large 8-inch cruisers and thirty-two 6-inch gun cruisers.
3. The final superiority of Great Britain in cruisers to be offset by an equivalent superiority in destroyers for the United States.

The adoption of some such agreement would not impose any prohibitive sacrifice on either government. It would, on the other hand, prevent increased construction in the future and would bring to an end the fear of naval competition. After such an agreement is reached, both governments might later agree to reduce their building programs in Treaty cruisers.

## POLICIES OF THE OTHER NAVAL POWERS

At their interview in Scotland, Prime Minister MacDonald and Ambassador Dawes made it clear that their two governments would not seek a separate naval understanding apart from the other naval powers. Apparently there are two reasons for this attitude: first, that no two governments can afford to reduce armaments when their neighbors retain complete freedom to increase armament; and second, that an Anglo-American naval agreement would inevitably be given a political interpretation, and might therefore be regarded suspiciously by France and other powers.

The three other powers immediately concerned in the naval question are Japan,

France and Italy. The success of the international naval negotiations which have been recently inaugurated will depend in large measure upon the willingness of these three powers to accept the Washington ratio of 5:5:3:1.67:1.67, or upon the willingness of Great Britain and the United States to accept a modification of their ratios for auxiliary vessels.

In cruisers and submarines all three powers are actually building beyond the ratios established at Washington for capital ships.<sup>72</sup> Japan's thirty-three cruisers built and building will give her a ratio of 3.51 to 5 for the United States when the fifteen American cruisers are completed. Eight of the Japanese cruisers are 10,000-ton 8-inch

71. The 15 new cruisers will presumably be finished in 1934, and will not reach the age limit for 20 years.

72. Cf. table, p. 184.

gun vessels, four are 7,100-ton ships with 8-inch guns and twenty-one are less than 6,000 tons, armed for the most part with 5.5-inch guns. France will have a cruiser ratio of 2.28 when her present construction is completed, and Italy 2.09.<sup>73</sup>

In submarines, the effect of recent building in Japan, France and Italy is even more apparent. Upon completion of the present programs, France will have 83,467 tons, Japan 80,007 tons and Italy 36,611 tons, as compared with 89,127 tons for the United States and 75,425 tons for Great Britain. The ratio will be as follows: United States 5, France 4.68, Japan 4.48, the British Empire 4.23, and Italy 2.05.

The nearest approach to the Washington ratios is in destroyers, in which Japan will have a ratio of 2.17, France 1.77, and Italy 1.70, as compared with 5 for the United States and 3.65 for Great Britain.

#### THE JAPANESE RATIO

At the Washington Conference the Japanese Government accepted the principle of the 5:5:3 ratio for auxiliary craft.<sup>74</sup> But at the Geneva Conference the Japanese delegation originally asked for 65 per cent of the cruiser and destroyer tonnage allotted to Great Britain and the United States—which is 5 per cent more than the 5:5:3 ratio.<sup>75</sup>

Recently doubts as to the willingness of Japan to accept the 5:5:3 ratio were expressed in a reported statement of the Japanese Minister of the Navy, Admiral Keisuki Okada, to the *New York World*. He declared that the 5:5:3 ratio had been accepted by Japan as far as capital ships are concerned, because

“... the effectiveness of the British or the American fleet in the waters of the Western Pacific is reduced to an extent which places it only in the position of parity with respect to the Japanese fleet.

“Because of the greater mobility of types of craft other than capital ships, this does not hold

73. Cf. table, p. 184. Does not include all of the ships projected in the French program, but merely those appropriated for. Cf. p. 190.

74. *Conference*, cited, p. 578.

75. *Records*, cited, p. 123. In the British-Japanese memorandum at the Geneva Conference it was proposed that the number of 10,000-ton cruisers be limited to twelve each for the British Empire and the United States, and eight for Japan. Japan was to retain her four 7,100-ton cruisers; but stated that she had “no intention of laying down any other 8-inch gun cruisers before December 31, 1936.” *Ibid.*, p. 41. Under this plan Japan would retain all of her 8-inch gun cruisers, and any scrapping would be restricted to smaller and older vessels.

for them. A 5:5:3 ratio extended down the line to cruisers and auxiliary ships would mean not effective parity for Japan, but actually inferiority. We feel it necessary, therefore, to insist on an arrangement which would do Japan justice.”<sup>76</sup>

Some observers regard it as possible that Japan will not be asked to accept the 5:5:3 ratio in auxiliary vessels because of the firm stand taken on this subject by France. The French Government not only protested against this ratio at the Washington Conference,<sup>77</sup> but in ratifying the naval treaty made a declaration to the effect that “the ratios of total tonnage in capital ships and aircraft carriers allowed to the several Contracting Powers do not represent the respective importance of the maritime interests of those Powers and cannot be extended to the categories of vessels other than those for which they were expressly stipulated.”<sup>78</sup>

A section of French opinion has also represented the position of naval equality granted Italy with France in the Washington treaty, and many Frenchmen appear unwilling to accord the Italian Government equality in cruiser strength in a new agreement. In its reply to the Anglo-French Naval Agreement the Italian Government declared that it was disposed to accept as the limit of its own armaments “any figures, however low they may be, provided they are not exceeded by any other European continental Power.” Italy’s naval needs are based on the fact that “Italy has only three lines of communication with the rest of the world, three compulsory channels for her supplies: Port Suez, Gibraltar or the Dardanelles.” Moreover, Italy “has an extremely long coast line, heavily populated cities and vital centers on its coast. . . .”<sup>79</sup>

The *rapporteur* of the Italian naval budget said (May 27, 1929) that it was essential to carry out the proposed naval program in view of “the progressive acceleration in construction on the part of other powers, for example France, which, after the notable delays suffered as a result of various causes in the programs of 1922 and 1923, now energetically pursues her labors. . . .”

He pointed out that Italy is in particular need of two types of vessels: (1) cruisers

76. Interview with Barnet Nover, *New York World*, June 14, 1929.

77. Cf. p. 177.

78. *Procès verbal*, U. S. Treaty Series, No. 671.

79. Note of October 6, 1928, Cmd. 3211, p. 41.

of 10,000 tons and the greatest possible speed; (2) submarines. The cruisers are needed by Italy because of "the exigencies of our Mediterranean situation." The submarines are needed for the purpose of maintaining "maritime communications" and for "replenishing the materials which are not found or can not be produced in the country"; the construction of "transport submarines" is recommended in order to avoid the situation of Germany during the blockade.<sup>80</sup>

The French attitude toward the Italian demand for equality is illustrated by a statement of the *rapporteur* of the French Chamber of Deputies on the navy budget. He declared that "France has to defend herself on three seas; she possesses an immense colonial empire; equality with Italy would mean inferiority in the Mediterranean where our interests are superior to those of Italy."<sup>81</sup>

In the early part of 1925 the Naval Committee of the French Chamber approved a building program (*le Statut Naval*), calling for the construction by 1943 of auxiliary craft as follows:<sup>82</sup>

- |                         |              |
|-------------------------|--------------|
| 1. Cruisers . . . .     | 210,000 tons |
| 2. Destroyers . . .     | 180,000 "    |
|                         | 390,000 tons |
| 3. Submarines . . . . . | 96,000 "     |

By the fall of 1928, 45.2 per cent of the tonnage in cruisers and destroyers and 58.8 per cent of the submarine tonnage had been completed.<sup>83</sup> The French program calls for the construction of more than two-thirds of the tonnage for auxiliary craft suggested at Geneva for the United States and the British Empire—550,000 tons. The French submarine figure of 96,000 tons is 6,000 tons more than the figure proposed at Geneva for the United States and the British Empire. It is evident that the French Government will not accept in regard to auxiliary craft the ratio of 5:1.67 laid down in Washington for capital ships.

#### FRENCH PROPOSAL FOR "THEORETICAL" EQUALITY

The formula to cover auxiliary craft pro-

posed by the French is characterized by the phrase *chiffres des prestige*—a proposal accepted by the British Government in the Anglo-French Naval Agreement. Under this scheme, all of the naval powers would be given the "theoretical" right to maintain the same tonnage in auxiliary craft. But at the time of the signature of a treaty to this effect certain powers, presumably France, Italy and Japan, would announce their intention to build not more than a specified portion of this tonnage during the life of the treaty. One advantage of this proposal, according to some, is that it might avoid any controversy over the respective ratios of France and Italy. Nevertheless, the Italian Government might reserve the right to build up to the French tonnage, a demand which the French are not inclined to accept.

The relation of the French to the Italian navy would seem to be primarily a European problem. If the British, French and Italian Governments were able to work out an agreement among themselves, the United States would not presumably challenge it. But if theoretical equality were granted to France and Italy in auxiliary craft, the same equality would necessarily have to be accorded to Japan.

The question has been asked, would the United States be disposed to grant Japan this position? In view of the recent debates in the Japanese Diet criticizing the present level of naval expenditures,<sup>84</sup> it is doubtful whether the Japanese Government would wish to build up to the American level in cruisers. The Japanese Government has announced its intention not to increase the eight Treaty cruisers now built or under construction, which approximate only a third of the Treaty cruisers contemplated for the American navy. The position of theoretical equality would, however, be presumably gratifying to Japan's feeling of prestige.

#### THE NEW GERMAN CRUISER

The announcement of a revolutionary new design for modern armored ships, developed by German naval architects, has intro-

80. *Camera dei Deputati, Ministero della Marina, 1929-1930, No. 19a, May 27, 1929, p. 9.*

81. M. Dumesnil, *Rapport, Budget Général de l'Exercice, 1929 (Ministère de la Marine), No. 612, Chambre des Députés, 1928, p. 65.* For the same view, cf. "Rivalité Navale," *Le Temps*, February 18, 1929 and the remarks of M. Lémyer, Senate debate on the naval program, *Le Temps*, March 16, 1929.

82. *Rapport, No. 612, p. 73.*

83. For the figures in 1929, cf. table, p. 184.

84. Cf. *Japan Weekly Chronicle*, January 17, and February 21, 28, 1929.

duced a further factor of general international significance. In 1913 the German navy consisted of 47 battleships and 50 cruisers. A blow to this fleet was dealt by the Treaty of Versailles, but before final disposition of the vessels could be made, the Germans scuttled nine battleships, five battle cruisers, five light cruisers and 30 destroyers at Scapa Flow.<sup>87</sup>

The Treaty of Versailles limited the German navy to six battleships of the *Deutschland* or *Lothringen* type, six light cruisers, twelve destroyers and twelve torpedo boats. Germany was forbidden to maintain any submarines. Vessels may be replaced after reaching 20 years of age. In replacement, armored ships are limited to 10,000 tons, light cruisers to 6,000 tons, destroyers to 800 tons and torpedo boats to 200 tons.<sup>88</sup>

In 1921 the German Reichstag voted sums to modernize old ships and to lay down a new cruiser, the *Emden*. In 1925-1926 it authorized the construction of four cruisers and twelve destroyers, and in 1928 the construction of one of four armored vessels, each of which is to cost about \$20,000,000.<sup>89</sup>

The first of these armored ships, the *Ersatz Preussen*, was laid down in December 1928. Hector Bywater, the British naval writer, describes it as follows:

"Limited to 10,000 tons normal displacement—equivalent to about 9,000 tons 'standard' displacement as specified by the Washington Treaty—this type has heavy armour protection over all vital parts. The hull is of shallow draught, and so minutely compartmented as to be capable of resisting several torpedoes or mines. Powerful Diesel motors, which take up exceptionally small headroom and are protected from gunfire by a vaulted deck of stout armour, propel the ship at high speed, reported to be as much as 26 knots. On deck are mounted six 11-inch guns in armoured triple turrets. These weapons, of a new high velocity model, throw a projectile weighing 660 pounds. They have a range of 17 miles, and can be fired three times a minute. The ship will also carry a strong anti-aircraft and torpedo armament. As will be seen, she really is a diminutive battleship enormously

superior in gun power and protection to the conventional type of 10,000-ton cruiser, which she could blow out of the water with impunity to herself. When four of these ships are ready for service the German fleet should be in a position, not merely to dominate the Baltic, but to make its weight felt in wider spheres, for the Diesel propelling plant of the new vessels will give them an exceptionally large radius of action, and, in view of their heavy armament, nothing less than a capital ship could deal with them."<sup>90</sup>

The restrictions imposed by the Treaty of Versailles have no time limit. In view of the sentiment of "navalism" in Germany, which still appears to be strong,<sup>91</sup> and of the general desire to be relieved of one-sided obligations, it is possible that the German Government eventually will ask to be relieved of the restrictions imposed upon its navy by the Treaty of Versailles.

As previously stated, capital ship replacements may generally be made under the Washington treaty after 1931.<sup>92</sup> A battleship costs at least \$35,000,000—a sum which will weigh heavily upon many governments. There is, moreover, a feeling that the expensive battleship is less effective, for technical reasons, than other types of ships, and widespread opposition to the replacement of battleships in accordance with the treaty is therefore developing.<sup>93</sup> France and Italy have already indicated their unwillingness to construct further capital ships, simply by declining to lay down in 1927 and 1929 the replacement tonnage authorized in the Washington treaty.<sup>94</sup> Apparently the British Empire, Japan, France and Italy all wish to take steps to curtail the replacement of capital ships as provided in the Washington treaty after 1931. The attitude of the United States Government toward this question has not yet been expressed.

90. Bywater, H. C. "The Rebirth of German Sea Power," *The Nineteenth Century and After*, February 1929. One report states that this warship has a cruising radius of 20,000 miles at 15 knots and that it will be able to outshoot any other in the world. *New York Times*, June 30, 1929.

91. Cf. Bywater's review of German literature attacking Britain's conduct during the war. Article above cited.

92. For the conference to be held this year, cf. p. 177.

93. A French military attaché has said, "The main, if not the only, French naval problem consists in protecting the transportation of the resources in man power and raw materials of the French-African bloc across the Mediterranean to France." The best way of protecting these resources is not to build warships, which are "too costly and too vulnerable. The cheap and sure weapons are, in our estimation, mainly the submarine and aeroplane, assisted by a certain number of very fast cruisers." Col. A. Fagalde, quoted in *Brassey's Naval and Shipping Annual*, 1928, p. 37.

94. *Rapport*, No. 612, cited, p. 74. Cf. p. 176. In October 1928 the Italian Government suggested that signatories of the Washington treaty postpone capital ship construction until after 1936. On February 14, 1929 Admiral Okada announced to the Japanese House of Peers that Japan was willing to do likewise.

87. France and Italy each received from Germany five light cruisers and ten destroyers for use in their fleets. Temperley, H. W. V. *A History of the Peace Conference of Paris*, Vol. II, p. 156.

88. Arts. 181-191, Treaty of Versailles.

89. For the Groener memorandum, urging the necessity of cruisers to protect the Baltic coast against Poland, cf. "Revision of the Versailles Treaty," F. P. A. *Information Service*, Vol. V, No. 8, p. 153.

BRITISH AND AMERICAN CRUISER FLEETS<sup>1</sup>

## British Empire

Name	Laid down	Completed	Displacement (tons)	Main Battery	Name	Laid down	Completed	Displacement (tons)	Main Battery
<b>Built:</b>					<b>Built:</b>				
Berwick .....	1924	1928	10,000	8-8"	Coventry ....	1916	1918	4,190	5-6"
Cornwall ....	1924	1928	10,000	8-8"	Curacoa ....	1916	1918	4,190	5-6"
Cumberland ..	1924	1928	10,000	8-8"	Danae .....	1916	1918	4,650	6-6"
Australia ....	1925	1928	10,000	8-8"	Carlisle ....	1917	1918	4,190	5-6"
Canberra ....	1925	1928	10,000	8-8"	Dauntless ...	1917	1918	4,650	6-6"
Kent .....	1924	1928	10,000	8-8"	Dragon .....	1917	1918	4,650	6-6"
Suffolk .....	1924	1928	10,000	8-8"	Cairo .....	1917	1919	4,190	5-6"
London .....	1926	1929	10,000	8-8"	Calcutta ....	1917	1919	4,190	5-6"
Devonshire ..	1926	1929	10,000	8-8"	Colombo ....	1917	1919	4,190	5-6"
Sussex .....	1927	1929	10,000	8-8"	Dunedin ....	1917	1919	4,650	6-6"
All listed below under 8" guns.					Delhi .....	1917	1919	4,650	6-6"
Vindictive ...	1916	1918	9,750	6-7.5"	Durban .....	1918	1921	4,650	6-6"
Hawkins ....	1916	1919	9,750	7-7.5"	Adelaide ....	1917	1922	5,550	9-6"
Frobisher ...	1916	1924	9,750	7-7.5"	Capetown ...	1918	1922	4,190	5-6"
Effingham ...	1917	1925	9,770	7-7.5"	Despatch ....	1918	1922	4,765	6-6"
Dartmouth ...	1910	1911	5,250	8-6"	Diomede ....	1918	1922	4,765	6-6"
Lowestoft ...	1912	1914	5,440	9-6"	Emerald ....	1918	1926	7,550	7-6"
Birmingham ..	1912	1914	5,440	9-6"	Enterprise ...	1918	1926	7,550	7-6"
Comus .....	1913	1915	3,750	4-6"	<b>Total built (54) .....</b>				<b>317,890</b>
Conquest ....	1914	1915	3,750	3-6"	<b>Building:</b>				
Carysfort ...	1914	1915	3,750	4-6"	Shropshire ..	1927	....	10,000	8-8"
Cleopatra ...	1914	1915	3,750	4-6"	Dorsetshire ..	1927	....	10,000	8-8"
Calliope ....	1914	1915	3,750	4-6"	Norfolk .....	1927	....	10,000	8-8"
Champion ....	1914	1915	3,750	4-6"	York .....	1927	....	8,300	6-8"
Castor .....	1914	1915	3,750	4-6"	Exeter .....	1928	....	8,300	6-8"
Brisbane ....	1913	1916	5,400	8-6"	Surrey .....	1928	....	10,000	...
Cambrian ....	1914	1916	3,750	4-6"	Northum-				
Canterbury ...	1914	1916	3,750	4-6"	berland ...	1928	....	10,000	...
Constance ...	1915	1916	3,750	4-6"	<b>Total building (7) .....</b>				<b>66,600</b>
Centaur .....	1915	1916	3,750	4-6"	<b>Authorized:</b>				
Concord .....	1915	1916	3,750	5-6"	1 .....	....	10,000 <sup>2</sup>	...	
Caradoc .....	1916	1917	4,120	5-6"	1 .....	....	6,500 <sup>2</sup>	...	
Calypso .....	1916	1917	4,120	5-6"	1 .....	....	6,500 <sup>2</sup>	...	
Caledon .....	1916	1917	4,120	5-6"	<b>Total Authorized (3) .....</b>				<b>23,000</b>
Cardiff .....	1916	1917	4,190	5-6"	<b>Grand Total (64) .....</b>				
Curlew .....	1916	1917	4,190	5-6"					
Ceres .....	1916	1917	4,190	5-6"					

## United States

Name	Laid down	Completed	Displacement (tons)	Main Battery	Name	Laid down	Completed	Displacement (tons)	Main Battery
<b>Built:</b>					<b>Built:</b>				
Omaha .....	1918	1923	7,500	12-6"	<b>Building:</b>				
Milwaukee ...	1918	1923	7,500	12-6"	Pensacola ...	1926	....	10,000	10-8"
Cincinnati ...	1920	1923	7,500	12-6"	Salt Lake City	1927	....	10,000	10-8"
Detroit .....	1920	1923	7,500	12-6"	CL 26 .....	1928	....	10,000	9-8"
Richmond ...	1920	1923	7,500	12-6"	Chester .....	1928	....	10,000	9-8"
Concord .....	1920	1923	7,500	12-6"	CL 28 .....	1928	....	10,000	9-8"
Raleigh .....	1920	1924	7,500	12-6"	Chicago .....	1928	....	10,000	9-8"
Trenton .....	1920	1924	7,500	12-6"	Houston ....	1928	....	10,000	9-8"
Marblehead ..	1920	1924	7,500	12-6"	Augusta ....	1928	....	10,000	9-8"
Memphis ....	1920	1925	7,500	12-6"	<b>Total building (8) .....</b>				<b>80,000</b>
<b>Total built (10) .....</b>				<b>75,000</b>	<b>Authorized:</b>				
					5 .....	1929	....	50,000	...
					5 .....	1930	....	50,000	...
					5 .....	1931	....	50,000	...
					<b>Total authorized (15) .....</b>				<b>150,000</b>
					<b>Grand Total (33) .....</b>				

1. Compiled by the Foreign Policy Association from "Navies of the World," printed for the use of the Committee on Naval Affairs, Washington, D. C., 1929, and brought up to date by reference to Parliamentary Debates, official Announcements, etc.

2. The precise size of these cruisers has not been officially announced.